

INTRODUCTION.

After considering the historic page, I have gained a profound conviction that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of causes. This barren blooming I attribute especially to a false system of education, gathered from books written by men who have been more anxious to make of women alluring mistresses than rational wives. I wish to steer clear of the error of addressing only LADIES, but to pay particular attention to those in the middle class. I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength of mind and body, and to convince them that delicacy of sentiment and refinement of taste are almost synonymous with weakness, pity and contempt.

I presume that RATIONAL men will excuse me for endeavouring to persuade women to become more masculine and respectable, though there is little reason to fear that women will acquire too much courage or fortitude. It seems scarcely necessary to say that many individuals have more sense than their male relatives; and that some women govern their husbands without degrading themselves, because intellect will always govern.

CHAPTER 1 THE RIGHTS AND INVOLVED DUTIES OF MANKIND CONSIDERED.

In the present state of society, it appears necessary to go back to first principles in search of the most simple truths. Thus, in what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than the whole; in Reason. What acquirement exalts one being above another? Virtue. For what purpose were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain knowledge denied to the brutes: whispers Experience.

Consequently, that the society is wisest whose constitution is founded on the nature of man, seems self-evident. Yet the desire of dazzling by riches, of commanding flattering sycophants, and doting self-love, have all contributed to overwhelm the mass of mankind, and make liberty a convenient handle for mock patriotism. Will men never be wise?

No man can acquire the strength of mind to discharge the duties of a king, where all feeling is stifled by flattery and power intoxicates weak men; but this simple piece of reason raises an outcry that its promoters are enemies of God and of man. After attacking the sacred majesty of kings, I shall scarcely excite surprise in declaring that every profession where rank and subordination constitutes power, is highly injurious to morality. A standing army, for instance, is incompatible with freedom, because subordination and despotism are the very sinews of military discipline. Besides, nothing is so prejudicial to the morality of garrison towns as those young idlers who conceal their deformity under gay ornamental drapery. Sailors come under the same description, only their vices assume a different and grosser cast. The clergy may have superior opportunities of improvement, but their colleges impose a blind submission, while obsequious respect is their only means to rise in their profession.

A man of sense may have some individuality, but the weak, common, man has his opinions so steeped in the vat of consecrated authority, that the faint spirit which the grape of his own vine yields cannot be distinguished. It is this pestiferous purple which renders the progress of civilization a curse, and warps the understanding.

CHAPTER 2 THE PREVAILING OPINION OF A SEXUAL CHARACTER DISCUSSED.

To account for, and excuse the tyranny of man, it has been argued that the two sexes, in acquiring virtue, ought to aim at very different characters: or, to speak explicitly, women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire REAL virtue.

Women are told from their infancy, by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, and OUTWARD obedience, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, every thing else is needless, for at least twenty years of their lives.

Thus Milton tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace; I cannot comprehend his meaning, unless, in the true Mahometan strain, he meant to deprive us of souls. Children, I grant,

should be innocent; but when the epithet is applied to men, or women, it is but a civil term for weakness.

However, let us trace how we might endeavour to make them co-operate, if the expression be not too bold, with the Supreme Being. Let us begin with individual education. The most perfect education, in my opinion, is such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart; in other words, to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent and to exercise its own reason. This was Rousseau's opinion respecting men: I extend it to women,

As a proof that education gives this appearance of weakness to females, we may instance the example of military men, who are, like them, sent into the world before their minds have been stored with knowledge or fortified by principles. Standing armies may be well disciplined machines, but they will seldom contain men of strong passions or vigorous faculties. Officers are fond of dancing, crowded rooms, adventures, and ridicule. Like the FAIR sex, they were taught to please, and they only live to please. Yet they are still reckoned superior to women, though in what their superiority consists, it is difficult to discover.

Probably the prevailing opinion, that woman was created for man, may have risen from Moses's poetical story; yet very few will seriously have supposed that Eve was, literally speaking, one of Adam's ribs, rather, the story proves that man, from the remotest antiquity, found it convenient to exert his strength to subjugate his companion.

The woman who has only been taught to please, will soon find that her charms are oblique sun-beams, and that they cannot have much effect on her husband's heart when they are seen every day, when the summer is past and gone. Will she then have sufficient native energy to look into herself for comfort, and cultivate her dormant faculties? or, is it not more rational to expect that she will try to please other men; and, in the emotions raised by the expectation of new conquests, endeavour to forget the mortification her love or pride has received? When the husband ceases to be a lover- and the time will inevitably come, her desire of pleasing will grow languid, or become a spring of bitterness; and love gives place to jealousy or vanity.

Nature has given woman a weaker frame than man; but, the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practising virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband. Though moralists have agreed, that the tenor of life seems to prove that MAN is prepared by various circumstances for a future state, they constantly concur in advising WOMAN only to provide for the present. Gentleness, docility, and a spaniel-like affection are, on this ground, consistently recommended as the cardinal virtues. She was created to be the toy of man, his rattle, and it must jingle in his ears, whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused.

But to view the subject in another point of view. Do passive indolent women make the best wives? So far from it, that, after surveying the history of woman, I cannot help agreeing with the severest satirist, considering the sex as the weakest as well as the most oppressed half of the species. If they are really capable of acting like rational creatures, let them not be treated like slaves; let them attain conscious dignity by feeling themselves only dependent on God. I love man as my fellow; but his sceptre real or usurped, extends not to me.

As to the argument respecting the subjection in which the sex has ever been held, it retorts on man. The many have always been enthralled by the few. Is it not universally acknowledged that kings, viewed collectively, have ever been inferior, in abilities and virtue, to the same number of men taken from the common mass of mankind? Brutal force has hitherto governed the world, and the science of politics is in its infancy. I shall not pursue this argument any further than to establish an obvious inference, that as sound politics diffuse liberty, mankind, including woman, will become more wise and virtuous.

CHAPTER 3 THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Bodily strength, from being the distinction of heroes, is now sunk into such unmerited contempt, that men as well as women, seem to think it unnecessary. Equally, superficial observers have inferred that men of genius have commonly delicate constitutions. Yet I find that strength of mind has, in most cases, been

accompanied by superior strength of body and natural soundness of constitution.

I will allow that bodily strength seems to give man a natural superiority over woman; and this is the only solid basis on which the superiority of the sex can be built. But women's limbs and faculties are cramped with worse than Chinese bands, and the sedentary life which they are condemned to live, whilst boys frolic in the open air, weakens the muscles and relaxes the nerves. Girls and boys, in short, would play harmless together, if the distinction of sex was not inculcated long before nature makes any difference.

I once knew a weak woman of fashion neglect all the duties of life, yet recline with self-complacency on a sofa, and boast of her want of appetite as a proof her exquisite sensibility. Such a woman is not a more irrational monster than some of the Roman emperors, depraved by lawless power. Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison.

Let not men in the pride of power, use the same arguments that tyrannic kings and venal ministers have used, and fallaciously assert, that woman ought to be subjected because she has always been so. Women, deluded by this sentiment, sometimes boast of their weakness, cunningly obtaining power by playing on the WEAKNESS of men; and they may well glory in their illicit sway. But should it be proved that woman is naturally weaker than man, from whence does it follow that it is natural for her to labour to become still weaker than nature intended? Arguments of this cast are an insult to common sense, and savour of passion. The DIVINE RIGHT of husbands, like the divine right of kings, may, it is to be hoped, in this enlightened age, be contested without danger.

Throughout the whole animal kingdom every young creature requires almost continual exercise. But, to preserve personal beauty, woman's glory! the limbs and faculties are cramped against nature. It is time to effect a revolution in female manners, time to restore to them their lost dignity, and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners.

In the superior ranks of life how seldom do we meet with a man of superior abilities? The reason appears to me clear; the state they are born in was an unnatural one. The argument may fairly be extended to women; for both wealth and female softness equally tend to debase mankind.

CHAPTER 4

ON THE STATE OF DEGRADATION TO WHICH WOMAN IS REDUCED BY VARIOUS CAUSES.

That woman is degraded is, I think, clear. The power of generalizing ideas, of drawing comprehensive conclusions from individual observations, is the only acquirement for an immortal being that deserves the name of knowledge. Without it, where is the store laid up to clothe the soul when it leaves the body? This power has not only been denied to women; but writers have insisted that it is inconsistent with their sexual character.

The grand source of female folly and vice has ever appeared to me to arise from narrowness of mind. Pleasure is the business of a woman's life, according to the present modification of society, and while it continues to be so, little can be expected from such weak beings. Exalted by their inferiority (this sounds like a contradiction) they constantly demand homage as women.

Ah! why do women, I write with affectionate solicitude, condescend to receive a degree of attention and respect from strangers? Confined in cages, like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themselves, and stalk with mock-majesty from perch to perch. The passions of men have thus placed women on thrones; and, till mankind become more reasonable, it is to be feared that women will avail themselves of the power which they attain with the least exertion.

Lewis the XIVth spread factitious manners and flattered women by a puerile attention to the whole sex. A king is always a king, and a woman always a woman: his authority and her sex, ever stand between them and rational converse. With a lover, I grant she should be so, and her sensibility will naturally lead her to endeavour to excite emotion, not to gratify her vanity but her heart. This I do not allow to be coquetry, it is

the artless impulse of nature, I only exclaim against the sexual desire of conquest, when the heart is out of the question.

This desire is not confined to women; "I have endeavoured," says Lord Chesterfield, "to gain the hearts of twenty women, whose persons I would not have given a fig for." The libertine who in a gust of passion, takes advantage of unsuspecting tenderness, is a saint when compared with this cold-hearted rascal.

I lament that women are systematically degraded by receiving trivial attentions. I scarcely am able to govern my muscles, when I see a man start with eager solicitude to lift a handkerchief, or shut a door, when the LADY could have done it herself, had she only moved a pace or two.

Men, in their youth, are prepared for professions, and marriage is not considered as the grand feature in their lives; whilst women, on the contrary, have no other scheme to sharpen their faculties. To rise in the world, and have the liberty of running from pleasure to pleasure, they must marry advantageously, and to this object their time is sacrificed, and their persons often legally prostituted.

Yet, novels, music, poetry and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of sensation. It would be an endless task to trace the variety of meannesses, cares, and sorrows, into which women are plunged by the prevailing opinion.

I am fully persuaded, that we should hear of none of these infantine airs, if girls were allowed to take sufficient exercise and not confined in close rooms till their muscles are relaxed and their powers of digestion destroyed. "Educate women like men," says Rousseau, "and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us." This is the very point I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves.

In the same strain have I heard men argue against instructing the poor. "Teach them to read and write," say they, "and you take them out of the station assigned them by nature." Ignorance is a frail base for virtue!

In the regulation of a family, in the education of children, understanding is particularly required: strength both of body and mind. Now, from all the observation that I have been able to make, women of sensibility are the most unfit for this task, because they will infallibly, carried away by their feelings, spoil a child's temper. The management of the temper, the first and most important branch of education, requires the sober steady eye of reason; a plan of conduct equally distant from tyranny and indulgence; yet these are the extremes that people of sensibility alternately fall into; always shooting beyond the mark.

Polygamy is another physical degradation; and a plausible argument for the custom is drawn from the well-attested fact, that in the countries where it is established, more females are born than males. Forster, after observing that of the two sexes amongst animals, the most vigorous and hottest constitution always prevails, and produces its kind; he adds, - "If this be applied to the inhabitants of Africa, it is evident that the men there, accustomed to polygamy, are enervated by the use of so many women, and therefore less vigorous; the women on the contrary, are of a hotter constitution... and thus the generality of children are born females."

The necessity of polygamy, therefore, does not appear; yet when a man seduces a woman, it should I think, be termed a LEFT-HANDED marriage, and the man should be LEGALLY obliged to maintain the woman and her children. The woman who is faithful to the father of her children demands respect, and should not be treated like a prostitute; though I readily grant, that if it be necessary for a man and woman to live together in order to bring up their offspring, nature never intended that a man should have more than one wife.

A woman who has lost her honour, imagines that she cannot fall lower, and as for recovering her former station, it is impossible; prostitution becomes her only refuge. This, however, arises, in a great degree, from the state of idleness in which women are educated, always taught to look up to man for a maintenance, and to consider their persons as the proper return for his exertions to support them.

In tracing the causes that in my opinion, have degraded woman, I not laid any great stress upon the example of a few women (Sappho, Eloisa, Mrs. Macaulay, the Empress of Russia, Madame d'Eon, etc). These, and many more, may be reckoned exceptions; and, are not all heroes, as well as heroines, exceptions to general rules? I wish to see women neither heroines nor brutes; but reasonable creatures.

CHAPTER 6.

THE EFFECT WHICH AN EARLY ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS HAS UPON THE CHARACTER.

The association of our ideas is either habitual or instantaneous; and the latter mode seems rather to depend on the original temperature of the mind than on the will. When ideas, and matters of fact, are once taken in, they lie by for use, till some fortuitous circumstance makes the information dart into the mind like the lightning's flash. Over those instantaneous associations we have little power. The understanding, it is true, may transcribe from the imagination the warm sketches of fancy; but the animal spirits give the colouring.

Education supplies the man of genius with knowledge to give variety and contrast to his associations; but the habitual slavery to first impressions has a more baneful effect on the female character. For instance, the severest sarcasms have been levelled against the sex, and they have been ridiculed for repeating "a set of phrases learnt by rote," when nothing could be more natural, considering the education they receive. If they are not allowed to have reason sufficient to govern their own conduct, we may admit Pope's summary "that every woman is at heart a rake".

Women should not be satirized for their attachment to rakes; nor even for being rakes at heart, when it appears to be the inevitable consequence of their education. Such men will inspire passion. Half the sex, in its present infantine state, would pine for a Lovelace; they want a lover and protector: and behold him kneeling before them- bravery prostrate to beauty! The virtues of a husband are thus thrown into the background, and the sprightly lover turned into a surly suspicious tyrant, who contemptuously insults the very weakness he fostered.

CHAPTER 7.

MODESTY COMPREHENSIVELY CONSIDERED AND NOT AS A SEXUAL VIRTUE.

Modesty! Sacred offspring of sensibility and reason! may I unblamed presume to investigate thy nature!

It appears to me proper to discriminate that purity of mind, which is the effect of chastity, and modesty, that soberness of mind which teaches a man not to think more highly of himself than he ought, properly distinguished from humility. General Washington was modest; had he been humble, he would probably have shrunk from his enterprise.

The shameless behaviour of the prostitutes who infest the streets of London, raising alternate emotions of pity and disgust, tramples on virgin bashfulness with a sort of bravado, and they become more audaciously lewd than men. But these poor ignorant wretches never had any modesty to lose, they were only bashful, shame-faced innocents. Purity of mind, genuine delicacy, only resides in cultivated minds.

As a sex, women are more chaste than men, and must heartily disclaim that debauchery of mind which leads a man to bring forward indecent allusions, or obscene witticisms. How much more modest is the libertine who obeys the call of appetite, than the lewd joker who sets the table in a roar. Again; when men boast of their triumphs over women, what do they boast of?

To take another view of the subject; in nurseries, boarding schools and convents, I fear, girls are first spoiled. A number of them sleep in the same room, and wash together, acquiring immodest habits; and as many girls have learned very indelicate tricks from ignorant servants, the mixing of them indiscriminately is very improper. I cannot recollect without indignation the jokes and tricks which knots of young women indulge themselves in, they were almost on a par with the double meanings which shake the convivial table when the glass has circulated freely.

Personal reserve is ever the hand-maid of modesty. So that were I to name the graces that ought to

adorn beauty, I should exclaim, cleanliness, neatness, and personal reserve. It is obvious that the reserve I mean has nothing sexual in it, I think it EQUALLY necessary in both sexes.

If men and women took half as much pains to dress habitually neat, rather than to ornament and disfigure their persons, much would be done towards the attainment of purity of mind. But women only dress to gratify men; yet the lover is always best pleased with the simple garb that sits close to the shape.

A Christian has still nobler motives to incite her to preserve her chastity and acquire modesty, for her body has been called the Temple of the living God, whose eye searcheth the heart. Would ye, O my sisters, really possess modesty, ye must remember that the possession of any virtue is incompatible with ignorance and vanity!

CHAPTER 8. MORALITY UNDERMINED BY SEXUAL NOTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD REPUTATION.

It has long since occurred to me, that advice respecting behaviour, and all the various modes of preserving a good reputation, which have been so strenuously inculcated on the female world, were specious poisons, that incrusting morality eat away the substance.

I recollect a woman of quality, notorious for her gallantries, though as she still lived with her husband, who made a point of treating with the most insulting contempt a poor timid creature, whom a neighbouring gentleman had seduced and afterwards married. This woman had actually confounded virtue with reputation; and, I do believe, valued herself on the propriety of her behaviour before marriage, though when once settled, to the satisfaction of her family, she and her lord were equally faithless- so that the half alive heir to an immense estate came from heaven knows where!

Men are certainly more under the influence of their appetites than women; and their appetites are more depraved by unbridled indulgence. I will venture to assert, that all the causes of female weakness, as well as depravity, branch out of one grand cause- want of chastity in men. To satisfy this genius of men, women are made systematically voluptuous, and, though they may not all carry their libertinism to the same height, women, of all classes, naturally square their behaviour to obtain pleasure and power.

Contrasting the humanity of the present age with the barbarism of antiquity, great stress has been laid on the savage custom of exposing the children whom their parents could not maintain; whilst the man of sensibility, who thus, perhaps, complains, by his promiscuous amours produces a most destructive barrenness and contagious flagitiousness of manners. Surely nature never intended that women, by satisfying an appetite, should frustrate the very purpose for which it was implanted?

That the two sexes mutually corrupt and improve each other, I believe to be an indisputable truth, extending to every virtue. Public spirit must be nurtured by private virtue, or it will resemble the factitious sentiment which makes women careful to preserve their reputation, and men their honour. A sentiment that often exists unsupported by virtue, unsupported by that sublime morality which makes the habitual breach of one duty a breach of the whole moral law.

CHAPTER 9. OF THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS WHICH ARISE FROM THE UNNATURAL DISTINCTIONS ESTABLISHED IN SOCIETY.

From the respect paid to property flow, as from a poisoned fountain, most of the evils and vices which render this world such a dreary scene to the contemplative mind. One class presses on another, men neglect their duties, yet are treated like demi-gods, and religion is separated from morality by a ceremonial veil. There is a homely proverb, that whoever the devil finds idle he will employ. And what but idleness can hereditary wealth produce?

Women are more debased and cramped by this than men, because men may unfold their faculties as soldiers and statesmen. Soldiers, I grant, can now only gather, for the most part, vainglorious laurels; the days of true heroism are over, when a citizen fought for his country like a Fabricius or a Washington, and then returned to his farm.

The statesman might with more propriety quit his card-table to guide the helm, yet he has still to shuffle and trick. The whole system of British politics, if system it may courteously be called, consists in multiplying dependants and contriving taxes which grind the poor to pamper the rich; thus a war, or any wild goose chase is a lucky turn-up of patronage for the minister, whose chief merit is the art of keeping himself in place. The preposterous distinctions of rank corrupt, almost equally, every class of people. Still there are some loop-holes out of which a man may creep, and dare to think and act for himself; but for a woman it is an herculean task.

Though I consider that women in the common walks of life are called to fulfil the duties of wives and mothers, by religion and reason, I cannot help lamenting that women of a superior cast have not a road by which they can pursue usefulness and independence. I may excite laughter, by dropping an hint that I really think that women ought to have representatives, instead of being arbitrarily governed without having any share in the deliberations of government.

But, as the whole system of representation is now, in this country, only a convenient handle for despotism, they need not complain, for they are no better represented than the class of hard working mechanics who pay for royalty when they can scarcely stop their children's mouths with bread. Taxes on the very necessities of life enable an endless tribe of idle princes and princesses to pass with stupid pomp before a gaping crowd. This is mere gothic grandeur, something like the barbarous, useless parade of having sentinels on horseback at Whitehall, which I could never view without a mixture of contempt and indignation.

Rather than all wanting to be ladies, which is simply to have nothing to do, women might certainly study the art of healing, and be physicians as well as nurses and midwives. They might, also study politics and business. Women would not then marry for a support; nor would a laudable attempt to earn their own subsistence sink them almost to the level of those poor abandoned creatures who live by prostitution.

How many women thus waste life away, who might have supported themselves by their own industry? Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship, instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers- in a word, better citizens.

CHAPTER 10. PARENTAL AFFECTION.

Parental affection is, perhaps, the blindest modification of perverse self-love; to many, it is but a pretext to tyrannize where it can be done with impunity.

As the care of children in their infancy is one of the grand duties annexed to the female character by nature, this duty affords many forcible arguments for strengthening the female understanding. Meek wives are, in general, foolish mothers; wanting their children to love them best, and take their part, in secret, against the father, who is held up as a scarecrow, who must inflict the punishment and be the judge in all disputes.

CHAPTER 11. DUTY TO PARENTS.

There seems to be an indolent propensity in man to make prescription always take place of reason. The rights of kings are deduced in a direct line from the King of kings; and that of parents from our first parent.

If parents discharge their duty they have a strong hold and sacred claim on the gratitude of their children; but few parents are willing to receive respectful affection on such terms. Rather, they demand blind obedience

Children cannot be taught too early to submit to reason; for to submit to reason, is to submit to the nature of things, and to that God who formed them. It is unreasoned exercise of parental authority that first injures the mind, as when they see mamma's anger burst out- either her hair was ill-dressed, or she had lost more money at cards than she was willing to own to her husband. Children cannot, ought not, to be taught to make allowance for the faults of their parents, because every such allowance weakens the force of reason in their minds.

But, till society is better constituted, parents, I fear, will still insist on being obeyed, because they will be obeyed, and constantly endeavour to settle that power on a Divine right, which will not bear the investigation of reason.

CHAPTER 12. ON NATIONAL EDUCATION.

I think that schools, as they are now regulated, the hot-beds of vice and folly, and the knowledge of human nature, supposed to be attained there, merely cunning selfishness. I should be averse to boarding-schools, if it were for no other reason than the unsettled state of mind which the expectation of the vacations produce. But, when they are brought up at home, boys acquire too high an opinion of their own importance, from being allowed to tyrannize over servants. Thus treated like men when they are still boys, they become vain and effeminate.

The only way to avoid two extremes would be to contrive some way of combining a public and private education. Many a distinguished man will recollect, with pleasure, the country day school; where a boy trudged in the morning, wet or dry, to return alone in the evening and recount the feats of the day close at the parental knee. But, what boy ever recollected with pleasure the years he spent confined at an academy? Besides, in great schools what can be more prejudicial to the moral character, than the system of tyranny and abject slavery which is established amongst the boys?

There is not, perhaps, in the kingdom, a more dogmatical or luxurious set of men, than the pedantic tyrants who reside in colleges and preside at public schools. A few good scholars, I grant, may have been formed by emulation and discipline; but, to bring forward these clever boys, the health and morals of a number have been sacrificed.

If marriage be the cement of society, mankind should all be educated after the same model. Were boys and girls permitted to pursue the same studies together, those graceful decencies might early be inculcated which produce modesty.

To render this practicable, day schools for particular ages should be established by government, in which boys and girls might be educated together. The school for the younger children, from five to nine years of age, ought to be absolutely free and open to all classes. Botany, mechanics, and astronomy, reading, writing, arithmetic, natural history, and some simple experiments in natural philosophy, might fill up the day; but these pursuits should never encroach on gymnastic plays in the open air.

After the age of nine, girls and boys intended for domestic employments, or mechanical trades, ought to be removed to receive appropriate instruction, the two sexes being still together in the morning; but in the afternoon, the girls should attend a school and do plain work, millinery, etc. The young people of superior abilities, or fortune, might now be taught the dead and living languages, the elements of science, and continue the study of history and politics. Girls and boys still together?: yes.

I know that libertines will exclaim, that woman would be unsexed by acquiring strength of body and mind, and that beauty, soft bewitching beauty! would no longer adorn the daughters of men. I am of a very different opinion, for I think, that, on the contrary, we should then see dignified beauty, and true grace. Exercise and cleanliness appear to be not only the surest means of preserving health, but of promoting beauty.

Humanity to animals should be particularly inculcated as a part of national education, for it is not at present one of our national virtues. This habitual cruelty is first caught at school, where it is one of the rare sports of the boys to torment the miserable brutes that fall in their way. The transition, as they grow up, from barbarity to brutes to domestic tyranny over wives, children, and servants, is very easy. The lady who sheds tears for the bird starved in a snare, and execrates the goading of the poor ox or patient ass, will, nevertheless, keep her coachman and horses whole hours waiting for her, when the sharp frost bites. And she who takes her dogs to bed, and nurses them with a parade of sensibility, when sick, will suffer her babes to grow up crooked in a nursery.

My observations on national education are obviously hints; but I principally wish to enforce the necessity of educating the sexes together to perfect both, and of making children sleep at home, that they may learn to love home; yet by being sent to school to mix with a number of equals, that they might form a just opinion of themselves.

Women should be taught the elements of anatomy and medicine, not only to enable them to take proper care of their own health, but to make them rational nurses of their infants, parents, and husbands; for the bills of mortality are swelled by the blunders of self-willed old women, who give nostrums without knowing any thing of the human frame. It is likewise proper to make women acquainted with the anatomy of the mind; never forgetting the science of morality, nor the study of the political history of mankind.

Discussing the advantages which a public and private education combined might rationally be expected to produce, I have dwelt most on such as are relative to the female world, because I think the female world oppressed. When I wish to see my sex become more like moral agents, my heart bounds with the anticipation of the general diffusion of that sublime contentment which only morality can diffuse.

CHAPTER 13.

SOME INSTANCES OF THE FOLLY WHICH THE IGNORANCE OF WOMEN GENERATES; WITH CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE MORAL IMPROVEMENT THAT A REVOLUTION IN FEMALE MANNERS MIGHT NATURALLY BE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE.

There are many follies, in some degree, peculiar to women; but all flowing from ignorance or prejudice, I shall only point out such as appear to be injurious to their moral character.

SECTION 13.1.

In this metropolis a number of lurking leeches infamously gain a subsistence by practising on the credulity of women, pretending to cast nativities. If any of them should peruse this work, I entreat them to answer to their own hearts the following questions, not forgetting that they are in the presence of God.

Do you believe that there is but one God, and that he is powerful, wise, and good?
Are you convinced, that he has ordered all things in the same perfect harmony, to fulfil his designs?
Do you acknowledge that the power of looking into futurity is an attribute of the Creator?

Say not that such questions are an insult to common sense for it is your own conduct, O ye foolish women! The men of old who laid claim to the privilege of speaking with spirits, insisted, that it was the reward or consequence of superior temperance and piety. But the present workers of wonders do not cure for the love of God, but money.

SECTION 13.2.

Another instance of that feminine weakness of character, often produced by a confined education, is a romantic twist of the mind, very properly termed **SENTIMENTAL**.

These are the women who are amused by the reveries of stupid novelists, who, knowing little of human nature, work up stale tales, and describe meretricious scenes, all retailed in a sentimental jargon, which equally tend to corrupt the taste, and draw the heart aside from its daily duties.

When, therefore, I advise my sex not to read such flimsy works, it is to induce them to read something superior. The best method, I believe is for a judicious person, with some turn for humour, to read novels to a young girl, and point out, both by tones and apt comparisons with incidents and characters in history, how foolishly and ridiculously they caricature human nature.

Besides, the reading of novels makes women, and particularly ladies of fashion, very fond of using strong expressions and superlatives in conversation, which only mimic the dark the flame of passion.

SECTION 13.3.

Ignorance and the mistaken cunning that nature sharpens in weak heads, render women very fond of

dress. Such a strong inclination for external ornaments appears in barbarous states, but there the men, not the women, adorn themselves. The attention to dress, therefore, I think natural to both sexes. So far is the inclination carried, that even the hellish yoke of slavery cannot stifle the savage desire of admiration which the black heroes inherit, for all the hardly-earned savings of a slave are commonly expended in a little tawdry finery.

Before marriage it is women's business to please men; and after, they follow the same scent. Is it then surprising, that when the sole ambition of woman centres in beauty, vanity gains additional force, and perpetual rivalships ensue?

An immoderate fondness for dress, for pleasure and for sway, are the passions of savages. And that women, from their education and the present state of civilized life, are in the same condition, cannot, I think, be controverted.

SECTION 13.4.

Women are supposed to possess more sensibility, compassion and stronger attachments, and even humanity, than men; but the clinging affection of ignorance has seldom any thing noble in it, and may mostly be resolved into selfishness. I have known many weak women whose sensibility was entirely engrossed by their husbands; and as for their humanity, it was very faint indeed.

But this kind of exclusive affection is the natural consequence of confined views; how can women be just or generous, when they are the slaves of injustice?

SECTION 13.5.

As the rearing of children has justly been insisted on as the peculiar destination of woman, the ignorance that incapacitates them must be contrary to the order of things. I have always found horses, an animal I am much attached to, very tractable when treated with humanity and steadiness; I am, however, certain that a child should never be forcibly tamed; for every violation of justice and reason, in the treatment of children, weakens their reason.

One striking instance of the folly of women must not be omitted. The majority of mothers leave their children entirely to the care of servants: or treat them as if they were little demi-gods, though I have always observed, that such women seldom show common humanity to servants. Nature has so wisely ordered things, that did women suckle their own children, they would preserve their own health, and there would be a reasonable interval between the birth of each child. But, visiting to display finery, card playing, and balls, not to mention the idle bustle of morning trifling, draw women from their duty. But, till more equality be established in society, we shall not see dignified domestic happiness.

SECTION 13.6.

That women at present are by ignorance rendered foolish or vicious, is, I think, not to be disputed; and, that the most salutary effects tending to improve mankind, might be expected from a REVOLUTION in female manners.

From the tyranny of man, I firmly believe, the greater number of female follies proceed. Asserting the rights which women in common with men ought to contend for, I have not attempted to extenuate their faults; but to prove them to be the natural consequence of their education and station in society. Let woman share the rights, and she will emulate the virtues of man; for she must grow more perfect when emancipated, or it will be expedient to open a fresh trade with Russia for whips; a present which a father should always make to his son-in-law on his wedding day, that a husband may keep his whole family in order.

Be just then, O ye men of understanding! and mark not more severely what women do amiss, than the vicious tricks of the horse or the ass for whom ye provide provender, and allow her the privileges of ignorance, to whom ye deny the rights of reason, or ye will be worse than Egyptian task-masters, expecting virtue where nature has not given understanding!